

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Rock Spring School

other name/site number: Providence Educational Center

2. Location

street & number: 3974 Sarpy Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: St. Louis

vicinity: N/A

state: Missouri county: Independent City code: 510 zip code: 63110

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public - local

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: St. Louis, Missouri Public Schools of William B. Ittner

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Clair H. Blachel

16 July 1992

Signature of certifying official Clair H. Blachel, Director

Date

Department of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper _____

Date
of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic: EDUCATION

Sub: school

Current : EDUCATION

Sub: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Craftsman

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE/limestone roof STONE/slate
walls BRICK other STONE/limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1898

Significant Dates : 1898 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Ittner, William Butts

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately .9 of an acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>739720</u>	<u>4279180</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Cynthia Hill Longwisch, Research Associate

Organization: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. Date: 4/19/90

Street & Number: 917 Locust 7th Floor Telephone: 314-421-6474

City or Town: St. Louis State: MO ZIP: 63101

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Section number 7

Rock Spring School

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SUMMARY: Rock Spring School (now known as the Providence Educational Center) is located at 3974 Sarpy in St. Louis, Missouri. The 1898 school, an example of the rare Cruciform-Plan Elementary School property type designed by William B. Ittner, is located in a primarily commercial/industrial area southwest of downtown. Of a design showing Craftsman influence, the three-story multichrome brick school exhibits a cruciform floor plan with a core corridor and four radiating arms of classrooms. Remaining in good condition and very much as originally built, the building has an access ramp for the handicapped on the front elevation as its primary alteration. The school is located near the front of its narrow lot, leaving only a strip of front yard between the building and its original iron fence. That strip, as well as the surrounding property, has been paved and is used for parking; the rear and sides of the property are enclosed by a chain-link fence. The original character of the landscaping of this school was doubtless of a minimal nature not unlike that which exists today. Its setting has been altered in that an elevated highway is now located within yards of the primary elevation of the school; few residential buildings are left in the neighborhood, which now consists largely of light industry.

NARRATIVE: Rising three stories above a high basement, the school has a slightly hipped slate roof with red clay ridge tile. The cruciform design is an early experimental attempt by Ittner to escape the dark, boxlike plans of older schools. As a result of this design, the hallways are unusually dim, although the classrooms appear to receive adequate natural light. The primary (north) elevation is eight bays in width; the two center bays project one bay deep from the body of the building. These bays are separated by a pilaster. Stone sills are present on these windows, as throughout. Windows in this projection are paired, four-over-four double-hung wood sash. A stone insert bears the name "Rock Spring School" above the second story. A stone sill course at the third story encircles the building; the two shorter windows in either side of the front elevation (three-over-three, double-hung wood sash) are of note. Their size accomodates a short blackboard beneath the windows; in Ittner's Jackson School, the same situation was met by infilling full-size windows. Flanking the center projection are entrances (the west steps have been recently modified to accomodate a wheelchair ramp) with rectangular transoms forming the bases for a bay capped by a round blind arch at the third story. Two sets of paired, nine-over-nine, double-hung sash complete the unit.

The dressed-limestone foundation of the building gives way to a light brown brick mix that extends to the first-story sills of the larger windows. Above a header course, a slightly darker brick prevails. The top story is defined by the bold reticulated pattern formed by the use of red brick with the brown.

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SUMMARY: Rock Spring School, 3974 Sarpy Avenue, St. Louis, is significant under Criterion C for its architecture and architect. St. Louis architect William B. Ittner, F.A.I.A., designed the school in 1898, his fourth public school in the capacity of Commissioner of School Buildings for the Board of Education. Ittner was determined to design a successful school plan that incorporated elements of beauty and practicality as well as comfort for the students and teachers. An example of the Cruciform-Plan Elementary Schools property type, this school features the second floorplan he devised, the first having been an H-shaped plan used in his three earlier other schools. It is one of only two cruciform-plan schools he executed for St. Louis in his efforts to develop a successful layout, and as such it represents another step taken as he worked to produce a wholly satisfactory floorplan. While different from his initial designs, it is not yet the "open plan" that ultimately became widely used (see "St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner" MPS).

NARRATIVE: Hiram Lloyd, a member of the Master Builders' Association, built Rock Spring School for \$40,000, a relatively small budget. The building was issued in September of 1898. Originally an elementary school, the building was sold to a private organization that operates it as the Providence Educational Center, a high school for young adults.

In this school, Ittner attempted to fashion a floorplan that would allow the greatest amount of natural light into the most classroom area. The resulting plan gives a three-sided exposure to each room. A center hallway receives light only from the large windows in the north-facing walls of stairwells that flank the projecting center bay; the light is filtered and corridors tend to be gloomy as a result. The compact shape of the school was probably as much a result of the low budget as of Ittner's attempt at innovative design. The design is probably a difficult one to heat, although cooling breezes should make it more comfortable in hot weather than most schools. The fact that the architect afterwards went on to other layouts is indicative that he was not entirely satisfied with the results of this school. In terms of his growth as a designer, this building represents another step, a gamble with a new idea that was not entirely effective.

Ittner made his first plunge away from the Classical Revival style with this school, which presages his later preoccupation with the use of polychrome brick to ornament wall surfaces, usually in diamond patterns. The Craftsman aesthetic is cited for this school because of the overhanging eaves and exposed rafters; Ittner's fondness for historical reference, which does not reach its height until later, surfaces here in the round-arched bays that flank the center projection, and in the reticulated brickwork.

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This is one of only a handful of Ittner schools no longer administered by the Board of Education. Highway 40, a six-lane elevated highway, passes within yards of the front of the school; that, in combination with the increasing industrialization of the immediate area, probably induced the Board to sell the school. Fortunately, the subsequent owner has seen fit to maintain the building and to continue its use as a school--the Providence Education Center --with few alterations.

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(This type of diamond pattern is seen often in Ittner's work, although usually of a somewhat more subtle nature.)

Fenestration in the sides and rear of the school is straightforward: paired or single units of four-over-four or six-over-six panes, double-hung wood sash prevail. A single, massive chimney is located on the rear (south) elevation, distinguished only by four rectangular stone-silled openings near the top. All basement windows are barred.

The shallow roofline is punctuated by narrow dormers housing vents. Overhanging eaves are emphasized by exposed rafters around all but the rear (south) projection of the cross-shaped plan.

The exterior of the school has been maintained in fairly good condition and appears to be in need only of such cosmetic treatment as trim paint. Alterations have been few and relatively minor; the handicapped access ramp is the greatest exterior change. Original landscaping was probably minimal, given the small available space and early date of the school; no vestige remains.

The interior of the building is apparently very little changed from its original aspect, although some room usage appears to be a bit different now that the building is no longer an elementary school but a private high school for young adults. This is the only one of Ittner's early schools to employ pressed-tin ceilings; they are heavily embossed with a floral design and cove molding and are present in the halls and at least some classrooms (others have acoustical tile). Corridors have granitic mosaic tile floors of random pattern and classrooms feature hardwood floors; marble baseboards are present throughout. Doors are of oak with tripartite transoms; oak is used for the chair rails and handrails of the iron stairways. Milk-glass pendant light fixtures are of the same flattened spherical design found in most of Ittner's early schools. The interior appears to be in good condition and remains intact with the exception of some classroom ceilings. Because the school is no longer the property of the St. Louis Board of Education, it faces an uncertain fate, although it appears to be in a stable situation at the present.

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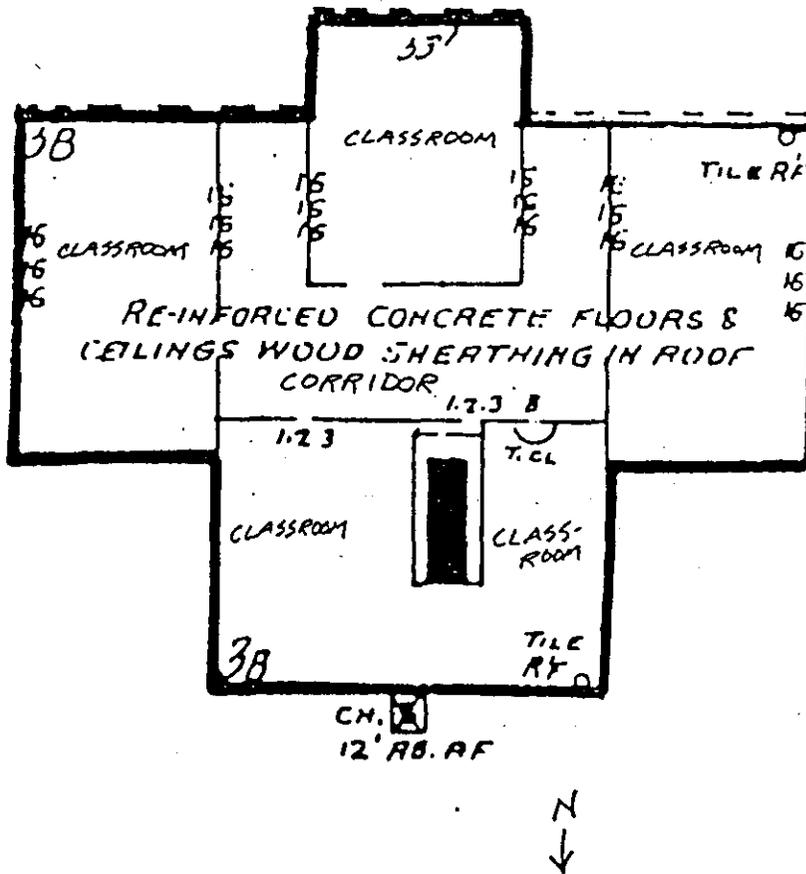
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ROCK SPRING SCHOOL

- BUILT 1899 -



Second Floor Plan, Providence Educational Center/Rock Spring School
c. 1930 (Sanborn Insurance Company map).

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Rock Spring School

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"Facts Concerning One Hundred Years of Progress in the Public Schools of St. Louis," Public School Messenger 35. St. Louis: St. Louis Board of Education, 1938.

Ittner, Marie Anderson. Footprints. St. Louis: John S. Swift, 1955.

_____. "William B. Ittner: His Service to American School Architecture," American School Board Journal (January 1941)>

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Verbal Boundary Description: Rock Spring School is located at 3974 Sarpy Avenue in the north half of City Block 3955 as follows: beginning at the intersection of St. Bernard's Lane and Sarpy Avenue, proceed 150' southeast along the right-of-way of Sarpy Avenue to the point of beginning; then continue 275' southeast along the right-of-way to the intersection of a north-south alley with Sarpy Avenue; proceed southwest along the right-of-way of the alley to its intersection with an east-west alley; proceed 275' northwest along this alley to a point 150' feet from the east right-of-way of Sarpy Avenue; then proceed northeast along the property line of 3974 Sarpy Avenue to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries described above encompass that portion of the city block which has been historically associated with the property.

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Section number Photographs

Rock Spring School

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The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Rock Spring School
3974 Sarpy Avenue
2. St. Louis [Independent City], MO
3. Cynthia Longwisch
4. April 1990
5. Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.
7th floor, 917 Locust
St. Louis, MO 63101

Photograph #1: Primary elevation; camera facing southeast

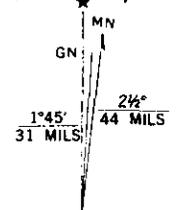
Photograph #2: rear and side elevations; camera facing northwest



480 000 FEET (ILL.) 741 742 12'30" UTM TO 74 744

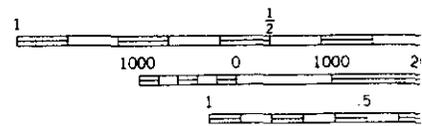
pped by the Geological Survey
 rised by the Army Map Service
 olished for civil use by the Geological Survey
 ntrol by USGS and USC&GS
 ography from planetable surveys by the Geological Survey 1930
 1933. Planimetric detail revised from aerial photographs
 en 1952. Field check 1954
 yconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 .000-foot grids based on Illinois coordinate system, west zone
 Missouri coordinate system, east zone
 30-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15.
 own in blue
 tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
 place on the predic American Datum 1983 UTM
 ve the projection li uth and
 ct of as show

**ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 OF WILLIAM B. HUNTER,
 1897-1901**



UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

There may be private inholdings within
 the boundaries of the National or
 State reservations shown on this map
 SCHOOL: 15/742 3 12/ 3230
 15/74362 100



CONT
 DASHED LINE
 NATIONAL GE
 THIS MAP COMPLIES V
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 STATE GEOLOGIC/
 AND THE DIVISIO
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRA

Photographs were renumbered to #1 and #2 on the Ittner Schools nominations prior to sending to Washington, D.C. Copies of photographs sent to Washington, D.C are filed behind the nomination in front of HEP's set of photographs.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SEP 20 1992
11:00 AM
JH

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001097

Date Listed: 9/2/92

Rock Spring School
Property Name

St. Louis City
County

MO
State

St. Louis Public Schools of William B. Ittner MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

9/2/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #3: Classification -- Ownership is given as "public-local," but both the State's nomination cover letter, and the nomination text state that this school is now privately owned. The ownership classification hereby is corrected to read "private."

This information was confirmed by Steve Mitchell of the MO SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



#1. ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF WILLIAM B. JENNER
~~PROVIDENCE EDUCATIONAL CENTER~~ / ROCK SPRING SCHOOL, 3974 SARPY, ST. LOUIS, MO
PRIMARY ELEVATION; CAMERA FACING SOUTHEAST



#2 ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF WILLIAM B. ITTNER
~~PROVIDENCE EDUCATIONAL CENTER~~ / ROCK SPRING SCHOOL, 3974 SARPY, ST. LOUIS, MO
REAR / SIDE ELEVATION; CAMERA FACING NORTHWEST